

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. – 19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A method for handling network accounting information, comprising:

- (a) receiving records indicative of network events from an input source;
- (b) storing data associated with the records in a table, wherein the table includes a plurality of rows each containing a plurality of columns each including data of a different type, the data of each of the rows expiring after a predetermined time period;
- (c) selecting action events based on the input source; and
- (d) executing the selected action events on the records;
- (e) wherein at least one of the action events is executed to delete the data of each of the rows upon expiring;
- (f) wherein multiple action events are executed in parallel;
- (g) wherein the action events operate on the network accounting information and are selected from the group consisting of usage metering, reading, tracking, correlating, and aggregating;
- (h) wherein the execution of the selected action events includes: discarding records stored during the execution of previous action events, parsing configuration data associated with the selected action events, and utilizing the parsed configuration data to repeat at least one of operations (a)-(d);
- (i) wherein a configuration event defines a plurality of action events by specifying code capable of executing each action event.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for handling network accounting information of any type, comprising:

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- (a) reading configuration data which defines a table by specifying at least one field identifier and a timeout type and period, the configuration data further defining a plurality of input sources by specifying at least one parameter for each input source, the configuration data further defining a plurality of action events by specifying code capable of executing each action event;
- (b) creating the table defined by the field identifier of the configuration data;
- (c) initializing the input sources;
- ~~(d) loading event handlers with the code included with the configuration data;~~
- (e) receiving records indicative of network events from the initialized input sources;
- (f) storing the records in the table;
- ~~(g) selecting action events based on the input source associated with the received records;~~
- (h) executing the selected action events on the records utilizing event handlers; and
- (i) deleting the records upon expiring in accordance with the timeout type and period of the configuration data;
- (j) wherein at least one of the action events is executed to determine whether the data of each of the rows is deleted upon expiring;
- (k) wherein multiple action events are executed in parallel;
- (l) wherein the action events operate on the network accounting information and are selected from the group consisting of usage metering, reading, tracking, correlating, and aggregating;
- (m) wherein the execution of the selected action events includes: discarding records stored during the execution of previous action events, parsing configuration data associated with the selected action events; wherein a configuration event defines a plurality of action events by specifying code capable of executing each action event.

22. (Cancelled)
23. (Currently Amended) A data structure embodied on a computer readable medium for handling network accounting information of any type, comprising:
- (a) a configuration data object which defines a table by specifying at least one field identifier and a timeout type and period, the configuration data object further defining a plurality of input sources by specifying at least one parameter for each input source, the configuration data object further defining a plurality of action events by specifying code capable of executing each action event;
  - (b) wherein the configuration data object is adapted for being used to create the table defined by the field identifier of the configuration data object, initialize the input sources, and load event handlers with the code included with the configuration data object;
  - (c) wherein multiple action events are capable of being executed in parallel;
  - (d) wherein the action events are capable of operating on the network accounting information and are selected from the group consisting of usage metering, reading, tracking, correlating, and aggregating;
  - (e) wherein the execution of the selected action events includes: discarding records stored during the execution of previous action events and parsing configuration data associated with the selected action events;
  - (f) wherein a configuration event defines a plurality of action events by specifying code capable of executing each action event.
24. (New) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the configuration data is written in an XML format.
25. (New) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the configuration data includes an XML header, a tables section, an input section, and an events section.

26. (New) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the tables section includes a name attribute, a poolsize attribute, and a flushhandlers attribute.
27. (New) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the input section includes a name attribute, a type attribute, and a handlers attribute.
28. (New) The method as recited in claim 27, wherein the handlers attribute contains a list of events that are triggered when each record arrives at the input source.
29. (New) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the configuration data includes a fields section.
30. (New) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein the fields section includes a name attribute, a type attribute, a key attribute, an overflow attribute, and a comment attribute.
31. (New) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the configuration data includes a timeouts section.
32. (New) The method as recited in claim 31, wherein the timeouts section includes a type attribute and a period attribute.
33. (New) The method as recited in claim 21, wherein the configuration data includes a params section.
34. (New) The method as recited in claim 33, wherein the params section includes a name attribute and a value attribute.
35. (New) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the events section includes a name attribute.

36. (New) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein the network accounting information includes a session source, destination, user name, duration, time, date, type of server, and volume of data transferred.
37. (New) The method as recited in claim 20, wherein an initialization event is executed for preparing for the receipt of the records.
38. (New) The method as recited in claim 37, wherein the initialization event includes reading the configuration data, creating tables, and creating input sources.
39. (New) The method as recited in claim 38, wherein creating the input sources utilizes the configuration data.